

**SUMMARY OF THE
NATIONAL DATABASE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 13, 1999**

The National Database Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, January 13, 1999, at 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) as part of the Fourth NELAC Interim Meeting in Bethesda, MD. The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Matthew Caruso of the New York State Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to update the current status of the planning for the National Database.*

REVIEW OF DATABASE REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT

Mr. Caruso provided a summary review of the requirements analysis for the National Database. Copies of the presentation slides are available from him (see Attachment B for contact information). The requirements analysis document, which was completed by the contractor that will be developing the database, is available from Mr. Caruso or Mr. James Stemmler of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The database, as currently proposed, will contain fields for information on the accrediting authorities and the laboratories. Accrediting authorities will keep the database up-to-date through either an interactive interface or batch jobs updates. The database will also provide for on-line query by the users. The online query will allow searching for an authority, a laboratory name or number, laboratories in a region or state, or laboratories accredited by programs, analytes, or groups of analytes. The database will also generate routine reports in a standard format about accreditation authorities and the laboratories.

The next steps in the database development were outlined and the EPA delivery order, under which the development will proceed, has been drafted.

Mr. Caruso noted that part of the database construction requires a list of approved methods (this will be part of the database structure until the Performance Based Measurement System [PBMS] is implemented) and developing this list is seen as a NELAC-wide function.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DATABASE

Database Administration

The database management system that will be used to implement the database is Oracle. EPA will administer the database.

The roles and responsibilities of database management/administration will be developed as part of the database development and in conjunction with EPA. Data transmission standards will also be developed by the contractor under the delivery order. This information may be available in 5 to 6

months from when the delivery order process is finalized and work begins. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) for uploading data will be developed by the contractor developing the database.

Links to Other Information

A question was raised as to whether results of proficiency testing will be included in the database. The current plan is that a proficiency testing database should reside with EPA's Quality Assurance (QA) Division, and this database can be linked to the national database. The national database will contain information on the accrediting organizations and accredited laboratories in addition to pass/fail information about proficiency testing.

The comment was made that as deliverables are done it is critical to get this information to the states so they can begin preparing for the transition to using the national database.

Comments on the database can be submitted through the face-to-face meetings, teleconferences (the dates for which are posted on the NELAC World Wide Website) or by contacting Mr. Caruso. Mr. Stemmler indicated that deliverables should be in electronic format so they may be posted on the Website.

Database Updating Issues

A schedule for updating the database was proposed to the Accrediting Authority committee and allows for daily updates for programs with automated systems and once a week for programs that will be performing manual updates. This proposal was not well received and attendees at the meeting suggested instead that a two week schedule be used for all programs to update the database.

It was felt that daily updates would be too frequent and two weeks would be acceptable. It was pointed out that a schedule of two weeks was not two weeks from the date of a change but at a regular two week interval. The schedule for the updates would include submitting a null report if there were no changes to report. In response to comments regarding the usefulness of the null report it was pointed out that the purpose of the null report would be to let the users know that updates were being done under the required frequency. By knowing that the database is periodically reviewed, it would help users know that the database is up-to-date as opposed to seeing that the last update was performed months ago. The comment was made that the date of the last update to the database should be made available to the users.

Part of being an accrediting authority would include meeting the update requirement(s) and would be part of the Chapter 6, Accrediting Authority requirements.

The comment was made that updates can be done automatically without need of a user performing an update. However, this may not be true for all programs, which do not have automated systems.

It was also mentioned that it may be advantageous to having a delay before performing updates. That way, if there is an error found or a change is needed after the update is performed, there would be time to correct the problem prior to the information being posted.

One other area of concern was whether data would be verified before it was sent to the national database. It was determined that this would depend on the programs submitting the data.

**ACTION ITEMS
NATIONAL DATABASE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 13, 1999**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Request to the Program Policy and Structure Committee and/or Board of Directors for a list of approved methods to be used in the National Database.	March 15, 1999

**PARTICIPANTS
NATIONAL DATABASE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 13, 1999**

Name	Affiliation	Address
Caruso, Matthew Chair	NY State Dept. of Health	T: (518) 485 - 5570 F: (518) 485 - 5568 E: caruso@wadsworth.org
Arms, Stephen	Florida Department of Health	T: (904) 791 - 1502 F: (904) 791 - 1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us
Baumgart, Mary Ann (Absent)	MN Valley Testing Laboratories	T: (507) 354 - 8517 F: (507) 359 - 2890 E: qaumvlt@newulmtl.net
Edens, Patti (Absent)	Equillon Enterprises	T: (281) 544 - 7747 F: (281) 544 - 7268 E: paedens@shellus.com
Flowers, Jefferson	Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc.	T: (407) 339 - 5984 F: (407) 260 - 6110 E: jeff@flowerslabs.com
Long, Jeri	Illinois EPA, Division of Laboratories	T: (217) 524 - 1392 F: (217) 524 - 0944 E: epa6110@epa.state.il.us
Macelletti, Nicholas (Absent)	CT Dept Public Health	T: (860) 509 - 7386 F: (860) 509 - 7295 E: mace101w@wonder.em.cdc.gov
Maxfield, Robert	USEPA/Region 1	T: (781) 860 - 4640 F: (781) 860 - 4397 E: maxfield.robert@epamail.epa.gov
Stemmle, James	USEPA/ORD	T: (202) 564 - 6878 F: (202) 565 - 2441 E: stemmle.james@epamail.epa.gov
Tupy, Allen	MN Dept. of Health	T: (612) 676 - 5680 F: (612) 676 - 5514 E: allen.tupy@health.state.mn.us
Cross, Michael (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: (202) 728 - 2045 F: (202) 728 - 2095 E: myc@rti.org